

# Road to Open Access in the Sciences: Exploring publishing trends in OA journals at York University

Rajiv Nariani ([rajivn@yorku.ca](mailto:rajivn@yorku.ca))

Leila Fernandez ([leilaf@yorku.ca](mailto:leilaf@yorku.ca))

SLA-DBIO Contributed Papers Session

14<sup>th</sup> June 2010

New Orleans, USA

# Overview

- Faculty OA journal publishing study conducted in Winter 2010
- Reasons for undertaking this survey
- Findings
- Recommendations

# Why support Open Access

*“As a library community, if we really wanted to change behavior of faculty about where they published, we needed to put our money where our mouth was – not only talking about open access, but help them do it”*

**Beth Weil, Head of the Bioscience and Natural Resources Library at UC Berkeley**

*“To place open-access processing-fee journals on a more equal competitive footing with subscription-fee journals—requires those underwriting the publisher's services for subscription-fee journals to commit to a simple “compact” guaranteeing their willingness to underwrite them for processing-fee journals as well.”*

**Stuart Shieber, PLoS Biology (2009)**

# York Libraries Support OA journal publishers

## Subsidy for Author Processing Charges (APC):

- ❑ BioMed Central: Since 2005
- ❑ Hindawi: Trial Sept 2009- Aug 2010
- ❑ PLoS: 10% discount towards APC

## Additional OA publisher supported

- ❑ Bioline International

# Institutional Funding for OA publishers

## Compact for Open-Access Publishing Equity

### THE COMPACT FOR OPEN-ACCESS PUBLISHING EQUITY

*We the **undersigned universities** recognize the crucial value of the services provided by **scholarly publishers**, the desirability of open access to the scholarly literature, and the need for a stable source of funding for publishers who choose to provide open access to their journals' contents. Those universities and funding agencies receiving the benefits of publisher services should recognize their collective and individual responsibility for that funding, and this recognition should be ongoing and public so that publishers can rely on it as a condition for their continuing operation.*

*Therefore, each of the **undersigned universities** commits to the **timely establishment of durable mechanisms** for **underwriting reasonable publication charges** for articles written by its **faculty** and published in **fee-based open-access journals** and for which other institutions would not be expected to provide funds. We encourage other universities and research funding agencies to join us in this commitment, to provide a sufficient and sustainable funding basis for open-access publication of the scholarly literature.*

*/signed/*



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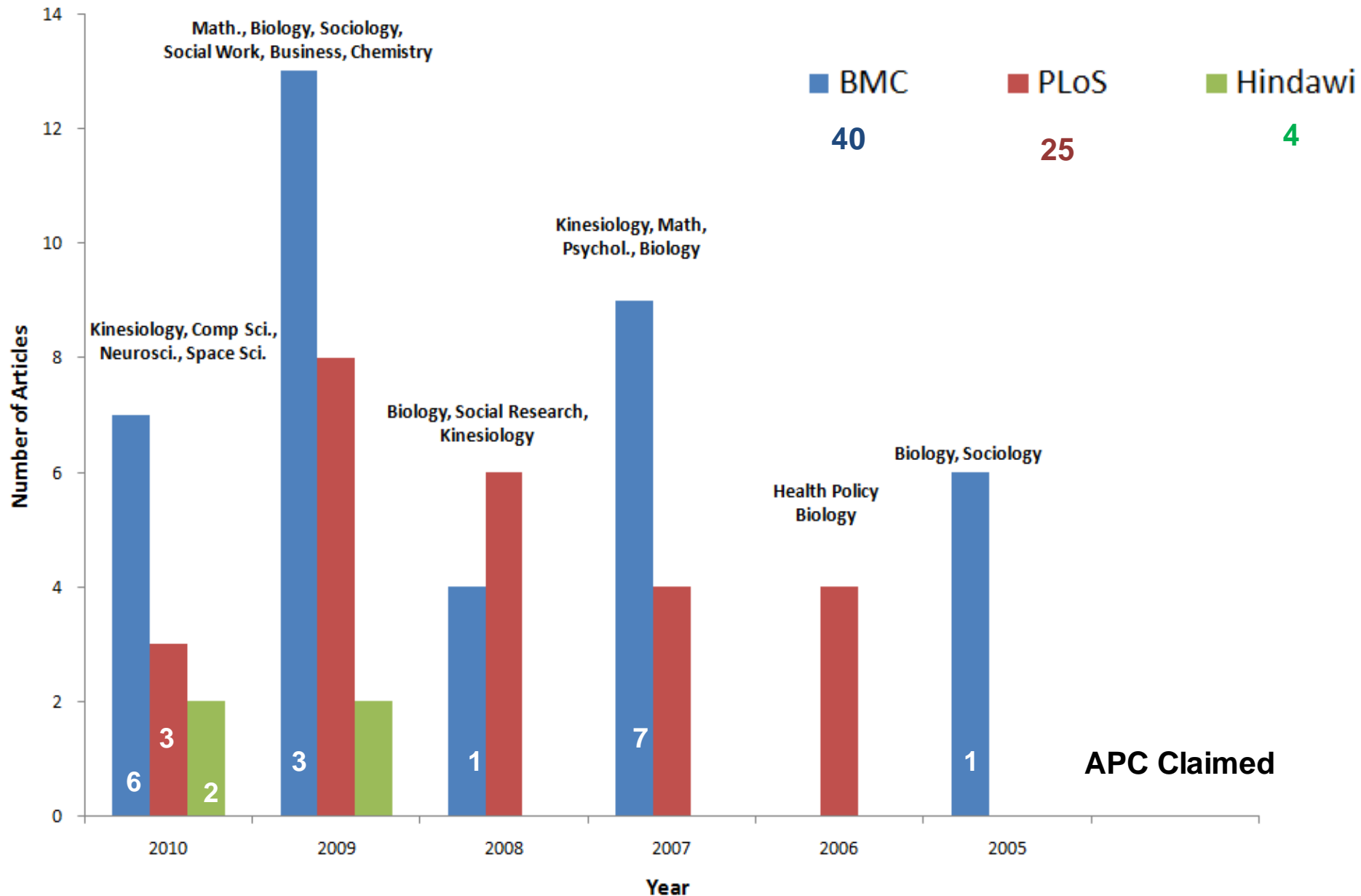
[Links](#)

### SIGNATORIES

The following institutions have signed on to the compact for open-access publishing equity:

- September 14, 2009
  - [Cornell University \(fund information\)](#)
  - [Dartmouth College \(fund information\)](#)
  - [Harvard University \(fund information\)](#)
  - [Massachusetts Institute of Technology](#)
  - [University of California at Berkeley \(fund information\)](#)
- December 8, 2009
  - [University of Ottawa \(fund information\)](#)
- December 11, 2009
  - [Columbia University \(fund information\)](#)
- December 13, 2009
  - [Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center \(fund information\)](#)

# Publishing trends in supported OA journals at York



# Study of York University Authors perceptions of OA publishing

- Ongoing study. Preliminary results.
- Conducted from Jan to April 2010
- Enlisted faculty members across the academic community who have published in selected OA journals

# Purpose of Investigation

- To assess uptake of author funding for publishing in BMC, PLoS & Hindawi journals
- To gauge faculty perception of OA journals (preferred features)
- To provide data to library administration for continuing support of OA publishers
- To identify local OA champions



# Methodology

- Semi-structured interview with open-ended questions
- Also available as online survey for faculty who requested online mode. Used [Survey Monkey](#)
- Affiliation of participants identified using Web of Science & Scopus
- Request for participation sent by e-mail
- Voluntary participation, no incentives provided
- Study protocol and questions were approved by Ethics committee

# Study details

- 30 minutes interview
- Questions related to
  - Demographics
  - OA Journal Awareness
  - Choice of OA journals
  - Preferred features
  - Barriers to Open Access publishing
  - Awareness of the Libraries' initiatives
  - Cost
  - Overall attitudes towards OA publishing

# Profile of Participants

- Faculty members from various departments across campus
- Median Research Experience: 14.5 years
- Number of participants interviewed: 7
- Number completing online survey: 3
- Respondents published in
  - BMC: 4
  - PLoS: 4
  - Hindawi: 1
  - BMC & PLoS: 1

# How did you first learn of this journal?

## Most frequent answers

- Had read articles in BMC and PLoS before deciding to publish
- Journal focus matched their subject area
- Recommendation by colleagues
- Advertising by OA publisher
- Authors had reviewed articles or were on the editorial board of other journals from the same publisher

## Motivation for submission: Most popular reasons

- Impact, community of practice, matched research interest
- Collaboration with researchers in developing countries and aboriginal communities
- Speed of publication
- OA Articles were indexed in PubMed
- No page limits and submission charges

# Comparison with 2009 PLoS author survey

- How did they hear of the journal
  - Most frequent answer – ‘colleague’ or ‘reading an article’ (similar to our responses)
- Motivation for submission to PLoS journals
  - Journal quality, OA and speed of publication (similar to ours)
  - APC was an issue in our case (unlike PLoS where it was not)

Features	V. Important	Important	Not Imp	Neutral
Impact Factor	5	3	2	
Matched Research Interest	6	4		
Articles read by colleagues from this journal	7	3		
Turnaround Time	2	5	2	1
Open Peer Review	3	2	2	3
Online Peer Review		5	2	3
Articles indexed in PubMed/Scopus	4	4	1	1
Article linked to PubMed from publishers site	3	4	1	2
Publishers supplied data/statistics for articles		5	3	2
Ability to attach supplementary material		6	2	2
Article mentioned by influential blogs		1	8	1
Pre-publication history available online		3	6	1
Publisher provides Web 2.0 Tools	1	1	6	2
Ability to post comments and/or reader ratings		1	8	1

**Desirable features: Researcher's responses**

❖ *Constant reminders and timely comments from the reviewers helped me in completing the article by the deadline and the article was published faster than I had anticipated!*

**Business Faculty Member**

❖ *My research does not give me the time to explore these (Web 2.0) applications however graduate students may be using them.*

**Health Sciences Researcher**



# Barriers to OA publishing: Faculty Responses

- Publishing in OA journals was not considered a barrier in the T&P process
- Perception that the peer-review process is not stringent in OA journals
- Grammatical errors in OA peer-reviewed journals
- High Article Processing Charges a concern for those who do not have grant funding

❖ *The department does not have any policy cautioning authors about wider exposure and higher citations to their OA articles and therefore publishing in OA journals should not be viewed as a barrier in tenure and promotion!*

**Neuroscience Faculty Member**

❖ *We shouldn't be charged anything. The publishers make money by other sources, they should not make money on the backs of the authors. In fact, they should pay us a nominal fee - without us, they would not have anything to publish.*

**Kinesiology & Health Sciences Researcher**

# Cost Factors

- APC distribution decided at the start of the research process
  - APC usually paid by the principal investigator
  - Faculty members receiving funding grants include it as eligible expenditure
- ❖ *If York was not a member then I would not submit to BMC because of their author fees.*

Health Sciences Faculty Member

# Overall attitude towards OA publishing

- Faculty members desire better press releases and coverage of the significant articles by OA publishers
- Some researchers mentioned that the level of content usually dictates where to publish - whether in a top-tier journal or a lesser journal
- Faculty have noticed an improvement in quality of articles in OA journals
- Faculty members are aware of funder policies requiring public access

❖ *I was involved in the initial planning stages of a BMC journal and I am impressed by the quality of articles submitted and the increased impact factor during this short period of time.*

**Biology Faculty Member**

❖ *It took more than two weeks for my OA article to be indexed in PubMed. That is unacceptable!*

**Kinesiology & Health Sciences Faculty Member**

# Promoting OA journals

- Subsidies for author publishing in OA journals publicized in the Library newsletter and York University's online newsletter (Yfile)
- CIHR workshops - venue for promoting OA initiatives
- Library promotional events such as *YorkWrites* & PMC Canada launch
- Interviews and OA survey

Publisher Features	BMC	PLoS	Hindawi
Listing of articles by Institution's authors on publisher's website	√		√
Details of Institution's authors serving as editors or reviewers			√
Journal Usage Reports	√	√	
Impact factors/Article level metrics for OA journals on publisher's website	√	√	
Details of Citations to Articles	√	√	
Highly Accessed Articles	√	√	
Article in XML format	√	√	
A & I Information	√	√	√
SWORD Protocol	√		

**Value-Added Features provided by OA publishers**

# Recommendations: For Publishers

- Provide a constantly updated list of institution specific papers
- Faster Indexing in STM databases including PubMed, Web of Science and Scopus
- Work with institution staff to correctly identify author affiliations before charging APC
  - Better reporting and transparency regarding claims



## To summarize

- ❖ Faculty publish in journals that are being read by their colleagues
- ❖ Impact Factor is an important consideration
- ❖ Speedy indexing of OA journals in PubMed and other STM databases is very important
- ❖ Publishing in an OA journal is not considered a barrier in the Tenure and Promotion process
- ❖ Few faculty members are not aware of article-level metrics
- ❖ Researchers appreciate the libraries APC support. The better endowed ones use their grants.

***☐ York Libraries has by far done one of the best things by supporting OA publishers and paying Author charges. Keep it up!***

**Kinesiology & Health Sciences Respondent**

# Future plans

- Expand our study to other OA journals in which York authors are publishing
- Make recommendations for a policy on author funding
- Encourage grant-funded authors to include APC as eligible expenses
- Promote OA funds more broadly across the campus

# Resources on OA Funds

- Open Access Funds in Action (SPARC)

SPARC®

## OPEN ACCESS FUNDS IN ACTION

Sponsor	Value	Date Established	Date Limit, If Any	Who is Eligible?	What is Eligible?	Reimbursement Levels	Progress/Success To Date
<a href="#">University of Oregon Libraries, Office of the Provost</a>	Up to \$50,000	Spring 2009	Extends through winter 2010	- Applicant must be a UO tenure-related faculty member, non-tenure-related career faculty member (including ranked officers of	Reimbursement will cover only direct costs for open access publication (not the cost of reprints, color illustration fees, non-OA page charges, web hosting for self-archiving, etc.).	- Up to 100% of author fee for publishing a peer-reviewed manuscript in an open access journal. Maximum reimbursement will be \$1,000 per article.	# Articles Approved: 8 # Articles Reimbursed: 4 # Unique Submitting Authors: 7 # Unique Departments: 4 (Human Physiology, Biology, Chemistry,

- [Campus-Based Open-Access Publishing Funds: A Practical Guide to Design & Implementation](#)  
Greg Tananbaum, Feb. 2010

Thank You  
& Discussions!